

California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley
Water Quality, Supply and Reliability Work Group
Water/Energy Work Group
March 2006 Update

Work Group Vision/Mission Statement

There are two complementary efforts underway to support the California Partnership's "Water Quality, Supply and Reliability Work Group." Both are staffed by the California Water Institute (CWI) at California State University, Fresno. The first effort is the creation of the San Joaquin Valley Regional Water Plan. Initiated by the San Joaquin Valley's congressional delegation, the San Joaquin Valley Regional Water Plan team is undertaking a region-wide process to develop a comprehensive, integrated business plan for San Joaquin Valley water projects in four categories: (1) water supply, (2) water quality, (3) flood control, and (4) environmental restoration. The second effort is the Water/Energy Work Group, which is focused on developing a plan to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy development for water/wastewater facilities. The vision of these complementary efforts is to ensure adequate water needed in the San Joaquin Valley to sustain the Valley's lifestyle; support regional economic growth; retain a world-class agricultural economy; maintain a reliable, high-quality urban water supply; and protect and enhance our local environment.

Partnership with the Congressional Effort to Create the San Joaquin Valley Regional Water Plan

Congressmen George Radanovich, Devin Nunes, Dennis Cardoza, and Jim Costa initiated the development of the San Joaquin Valley Regional Water Plan just prior to the launch of the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley. Given the comprehensive nature of the congressional effort, the California Partnership agreed to work through the federal process to develop the action plan and the majority of the recommendations for the state. In addition, the California Partnership has convened an additional sub-work group that is focusing on water and energy issues.

Summary of Scope of Work

The effort to create the San Joaquin Valley Regional Water Plan has been organized into four sub-groups. Collectively, the sub-groups are creating a strategy that can be used as a guideline for water use to create sustainability, support population growth and protect and enhance our environment. These sub-groups are organized by four water-related needs within the region: (1) Water Supply, (2) Water Quality, (3) Flood Control, and (4) Environmental Enhancement. Members of the water community, representatives of industries and communities relying on water, and organizations dedicated to the enhancement of the environment populate the work groups. The sub-groups also include irrigation district managers, water agency members, water resource engineers, government officials, agribusiness representatives, public works managers, and environmentalists.

The first task of the sub-groups is an audit of existing needs, water projects, and institutional barriers. All relevant state, federal and local agencies, entities and individuals are being surveyed to solicit the following information, which will be cataloged and organized into a database:

- Water-related needs within the region to include:
 - Water supply
 - Water quality
 - Flood control, and
 - Environmental enhancement
- Known projects or opportunities for meeting these water-related needs that could benefit from state and/or federal funding; and

- Legal and institutional policy barriers that serve to obstruct meeting regional water-related needs.

The sub-groups have been tasked with:

- Preparing the survey questionnaire for their respective water-related issues;
- Developing a list of the state, federal and local agencies, entities and individuals to whom the surveys need to be sent and encouraging responses to the survey;
- Reviewing returned surveys for completeness and appropriateness (with follow up to respondents as necessary);
- Preparing and outlining a brief report, which will be used to summarize the data collected, illuminating or highlighting areas of particular interest and the suggested analysis of the data so as to best serve the effort's objectives; and
- Provide review and comment of the summary report.

Progress to Date

Regional Water Plan Survey - Progress and Methodology

To date, each of the sub-groups has submitted drafts of surveys for their respective groups. The California Water Institute staff and Fresno State survey specialists have further refined the questions, formatted and combined them into one survey document draft. The draft survey has been circulated to the four sub-groups is currently undergoing review, comment and refinement. After CWI receives changes from the four sub-groups, those changes will be incorporated, and a meeting of the four sub-group chairs and co-chairs will be called for a final review session. CWI staff will then program the survey on the CWI web site so the survey may be taken electronically (hard copy surveys will be available upon request). The survey will be beta-tested, and then will be released to the public.

Each sub-group has provided a list of stakeholders to whom the survey will be distributed. E-mails and postcards will be sent to the stakeholder group to promote participation in the survey process. Stakeholders will have 4-6 weeks to complete the survey.

Once completed, CWI staff will compile and synthesize the survey data and return it to the sub-groups for their review. The sub-groups will convene to review the survey findings and will create the list of worthwhile and needed water projects within the region.

Water/Energy Work Group Progress

To promote renewable energy the Water/Energy Work Group coordinated a tour of the cutting-edge Semitropic Water Storage District's new 1 megawatt tracking solar array near Wasco, California on March 8, 2006. Wide-spread adoption of solar energy by water agencies in the San Joaquin Valley would (1) expand California's distributed generation capability; (2) generate critical summer peaking power to augment electrical grids; (3) reduce the environmental footprint of electrical power generation; and (4) fix water agency electrical rate and save rate payers money. The Water/Energy Work Group is

Next Steps

A tremendous amount of work is underway for the San Joaquin Valley Regional Water Plan team. Next steps include collecting the completed surveys, reviewing the preliminary data for completeness and appropriateness, and releasing a draft report on the survey findings. From there, Partnership and San Joaquin Valley Regional Water Plan stakeholders will begin to prioritize recommendations for the Partnership's final action plan. In addition, the Water/Energy Work Group is focusing on developing recommendations for accelerating adoption of solar energy by San Joaquin Valley water agencies.